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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINGSTON 001572

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CAR (BENT), INL/LP (NBOZZOLO AND KBROWN),  
SOUTHCOM FOR RHANNAN, CA/OCS/ACS/WHA RUTH BRANSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/17/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [CASC](#) [KCRM](#) [ASEC](#) [JM](#)

SUBJECT: JAMAICA: LAW ENFORCEMENT SNAPSHOTS

REF: A. KINGSTON 01465

[B](#). KINGSTON 01501

Classified By: CDA Thomas C. Tighe for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

The following is a snapshot of recent law enforcement developments:

- [1](#). Jamaica's First Money Laundering Conviction
- [2](#). PSB Probing Criminal Activity in the JCF
- [3](#). Operation Kingfish's Impact on Crime
- [4](#). 800 Pounds of Ganja Seized
- [5](#). Significant Seizure of Hash Oil

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Jamaica's First Money Laundering Conviction  
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[1](#). (U) According to officials of from the Finance Ministry's Financial Investigation Division (FID), Jamaica had its first conviction for money laundering on June 14 when Roxroy Mendez, a former accounts supervisor at Victoria Mutual Building Society (VMBS) in Ocho Rios, pleaded guilty to 32 of 59 counts of money laundering. Mendez was sentenced to two years imprisonment at hard labor and fined JM\$1 million. Mendez' wife was charged with nine counts but was admonished and discharged.

[2](#). (U) Prosecutors claimed that Mendez used his position at the building society to electronically transfer and convert funds from the building society's account to savings accounts held or controlled by him, his wife, and other connected persons. An application will be made for the court to order forfeiture of assets gained from the commission of the offenses.

[3](#). (C) In a June 17 conversation with Poloff, Director of the FID, Christine Chambers, stated that the FID's investigation into this case began in 2003 and because of the slow judicial system, it took exactly two years to see it come to a conclusion. She noted that Mrs. Mendez was discharged because the prosecution took into consideration that the family had two small children. Chambers stated that the FID is very pleased with the outcome and noted that while the Mendez case is not narcotics related, there are several additional cases with the DPP, two of them high profile, that are. She noted that over the past two years it has been very frustrating attending meetings of the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force and having to report that Jamaica had not yet had a money-laundering conviction.

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PSB Probing Criminal Activity in the JCF  
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[4](#). (U) Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) Assistant Commissioner Novelette Grant told reporters on June 17 that a number of police officers, including one high-ranking officer, have been implicated in a car-theft ring. Details are not being released as the investigation is ongoing. In another case, a policeman was arrested on June 16 after he was found with a substance resembling cocaine. The officer will also face charges for illegal possession of ammunition. Grant heads the Professional Standards Branch (PSB), a unit of the JCF whose mandate is to stamp out corruption. This announcement comes on the heels of Commissioner Lucius Thomas' June 1 public statement that there are criminals within the ranks of the JCF involved in crimes ranging from selling ammunition to participation in the illegal drug trade. (Ref A)

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Operation Kingfish's Impact on Crime  
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[5](#). (U) Operation Kingfish, a GOJ anti-crime initiative that targets criminal gangs and organized crime leaders, has had a significant impact on crime in Jamaica, noted Minister of National Security Peter Phillips in a recent press conference.

[6](#). (SBU) Phillips alleged that there is an unfortunate correlation between Operation Kingfish's successes and the

rise in violent crime, claiming that drug traffickers were exacting vengeance on society for the damage done to their business by Kingfish. NAS Law Enforcement Development Advisor (LEDA) advised Poloff that while there is a correlation between Kingfish and the rise in violent crime, it is due to a reduction in drug proceeds that has encouraged criminals to seek other means to finance their operations, such as the extortion racket. Police intelligence attributes many of the murders to gang infighting and turf battles. (Note: As of June 22, Jamaica's murder rate was 820. End Note.)

17. (SBU) Since June 1, Operation Kingfish has been credited with the arrests of 17 people. The cases cover serious crimes such as possession of illegal firearms and ammunition, drug offenses, murder and shootings. Post law enforcement representatives have also confirmed that as a result of Operation Kingfish, Donald "Zeeks" Phipps, the PNP-linked area leader of Matthews Lane in downtown Kingston, was arrested for the April 15 murder of two men, and a raid of Phipps' premises turned up JM\$18 million, ski masks, bullet proof vests, an Enforcer machine gun, ammunition and ganja.

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800 Pounds of Ganja Seized  
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18. (U) On June 16, 14 knitted bags with approximately 111 packages of compressed ganja totaling 800 pounds were found near the shore of Parottee beach in St. Elizabeth. The drug has an estimated street value of JM\$4 million. While an unidentified man was apprehended in connection with the find, he has not been charged.

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Significant Seizure of Hash Oil  
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19. (SBU) On June 10, through the work of Post's DEA Country Office, 974 pounds of hash oil with an estimated street value of U.S.\$5 million dollars, destined for Canada, was seized at Donald Sangster International Airport in Montego Bay. Three men have been arrested in connection with this seizure. (Ref B)

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Comment  
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110. (SBU) The "snapshots" described above represent hard-won GOJ law enforcement victories, some of which involved cooperation with USG and UK entities. The cases demonstrate both the types of successes of which the GOJ is capable (with commitment and focus), and the variety and magnitude of the law enforcement challenges facing the authorities. End Comment.  
TIGHE